

American Profile

Acts of Kindness

Our annual tribute to ordinary Americans
doing good deeds for one another

INSIDE:

- Chelsea Milling Co.
makes baking a jiffy
- Tillie's tempting
cheese potatoes

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Ask American Profile

Q Back in the 1960s, there was a TV show called *Lawman*. The star had a bit part in Clint Eastwood's *Pale Rider*. Do you know who he was?

—Elaine Gibbs, Springtown, Texas

John Russell played marshal Dan Troop in *Lawman* from 1958 to 1962 and appeared in *Pale Rider* in 1985. He had roles as well in two other Eastwood movies, *Honkytonk Man* and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Russell was 70 when he died of emphysema in 1991.



John Russell as the Lawman

Q I loved the show *Karen Sisco* and the actress who played her. She looks familiar. Has she been in any other TV shows or movies?

—Joan Murphee, Middleburg, Fla.

Florida-born Carla Gugino, who played sexy, brainy U.S. marshal Karen Sisco in the short-lived 2003 TV series of the same name, made her performance debut as a teenager in a TV episode of *Who's the Boss*. A niece of the *Let's Make a Deal* "prize model" Carrol Merrill, Gugino, 35, also has appeared in the movies *Spy Kids*, *Sin City* and *Michael*, and the TV shows *Spin City*, *Chicago Hope* and *Threshold*. You can see her in the new Ben Stiller movie comedy *Night at the Museum*.

* Cover photo by Matt Cashore

Carla Gugino was TV's Karen Sisco.

CMT

Ring in the New Year with CMT!

Ring out the old and ring in the new over New Year's weekend as CMT presents episodes of family favorites *Mama's Family* and *Hee Haw*—plus a New Year's Day marathon of high-spirited hijinks from Bo, Luke, Daisy, Uncle Jessie, Boss Hogg and the rest of the rowdies on *The Dukes of Hazard*. Check local listings for exact times and dates.

Q My all-time favorite actor is James Garner, excellent in any kind of role. What's he doing now, and has he written an autobiography?

—Joe Copeland, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The prolific and likeable actor, 78, has not written an autobiography, but perhaps he should—it would be a good read! He sold men's clothing, modeled bathing suits, worked at a gas station and received a Purple Heart for his military service in Korea—all before finding stardom in the TV shows *Maverick* and *The Rockford Files*. Earlier this year, Garner returned for a triumphant homecoming to Norman, Okla., where he was honored with a bronze statue, a street named in his honor and an honorary high school diploma.



Actor James Garner



Rick Springfield is back on the concert trail.

Q What happened to Rick Springfield?

—Barbara Schofield, Brookings, Ore.

The "Jessie's Girl" singer and actor took time off from show business in the 1990s to raise his two sons. But now that they're grown, he's back touring with his band and appearing occasionally on *General Hospital*, reprising his '80s TV role of Dr. Noah Drake. If you can't catch him in concert, check out his new DVD, *Rick Springfield Live in Rockfield*, recorded at the Coronado Theater in Rockford, Ill.

What is your favorite Easter memory?

Colorful tulips and warm spring rains, bright sunshine and Easter egg hunts, a brand new outfit and Sunday church services. Easter is a holiday filled with fond memories and family traditions. If you have a favorite Easter memory that you'd like to share for an upcoming story, mail a 100-word or less description—and a photograph if you have one—along with your name, address and phone number to: Easter Memories, *American Profile*, 341 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 400, Franklin, TN, 37067, by Jan. 15. Submissions will not be returned and will become the property of Publishing Group of America.

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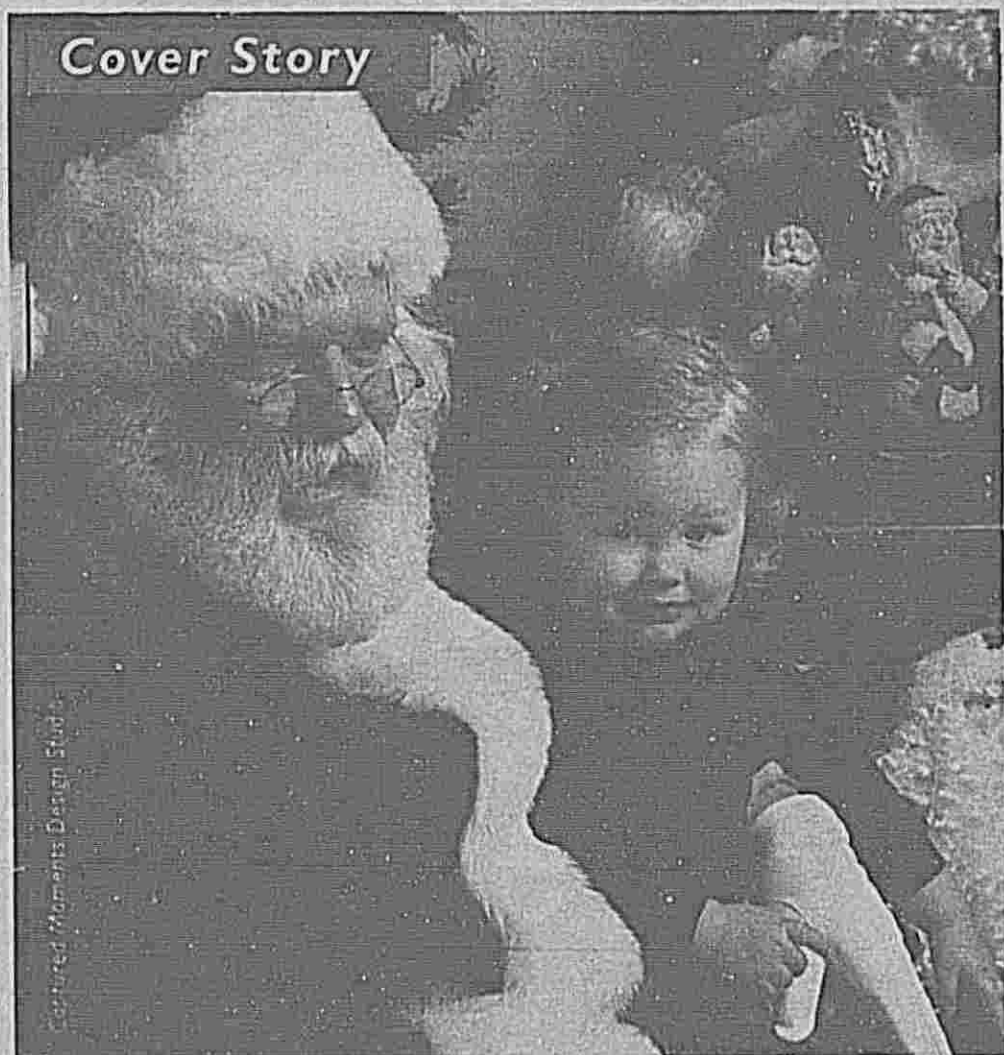
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Cover Story



Santa's helper Donnie Cain spreads Christmas joy in Seneca, S.C.



A stranger comforted Maria Griego after a dreadful automobile accident in New Mexico.

by MARTA W. ALDRICH
Contributing Editor

Acts of Kindness

Each year, *American Profile* publishes a collection of stories about ordinary people doing remarkable deeds for others without expecting recognition or acknowledgement in return. Here are a few favorites sent in by readers this year:

Saint Santa

Donnie Cain says he is shy by nature, but you'd never know it when he dons a red suit, grows a full white beard and becomes Santa Claus' No. 1 helper in Seneca, S.C., (pop. 7,652) each Christmas season.

Cain, 55, and his Santa suit stay busy on nights, weekends and even his lunch break—visiting schools, churches, nursing homes, hospitals and businesses—to bring the spirit of Christmas to people ages 1 to 92. He does not accept payment and sometimes uses his vacation time to accommodate all the requests.

"He's so popular that we have to take appointments to get everyone in," says his wife, Jean.

Cain first portrayed the jolly fellow in 1990 for elderly residents at Seneca Health & Rehab Center, where he is maintenance director, and was hooked by the smiles and laughter that his holiday antics elicited. He says he is equally at ease with children, who "just seem to take to me."

Betty Jo Moore, of Walhalla, S.C., says Cain is one of the few people who could get her mother to smile when she lived at the Seneca nursing home before her death last year at age 98. "He looks more like the real Santa than the real Santa," she gushes. "He gets his picture made with everyone, gives them a big hug and a kiss, interacts with both the residents and their families. He truly reflects the spirit of Christmas."

Guardian angel

Maria Griego doesn't know his name or where he lives—only that a short, dark-haired, middle-aged stranger with a soothing voice held her hand through her cracked car window while they waited together for an ambulance after a near-fatal crash on a rural road outside of Santa Fe, N.M.

The 23-year-old sales associate was driving home from work in November 2005 when an oncoming

car pulled in front of her. "I remember my car spinning across the highway and I was injured pretty bad," she says. "My head hit the windshield and shattered it, and my legs were trapped under the steering column. I was bleeding, and I had glass in my mouth."

The other car's driver checked on her, but it was an anonymous passerby who came to her rescue. He called the ambulance and police and, at Maria's request, used her cell phone to call her parents, who were vacationing in Albuquerque. "I asked this voice if he was a police officer," recalls Maria's mom, Martha Griego. "He said, 'No, but I stopped to help your daughter and I won't leave 'til I know she's OK.'"

The stranger was true to his word, and left only as Maria was being put in an ambulance. She suffered severe whiplash, cuts and bruises, but thanks to her seatbelt and months of physical therapy, is OK today.

The whole Griego family still wonders about the stranger's identity. "We never got to personally thank him, but we consider him our daughter's guardian angel," says Martha Griego. "We keep him and his family in our prayers."



Susan Cook delivers donated flowers.

Our annual tribute to ordinary Americans doing good deeds for one another

Nature's medicine

Around Thurston Woods retirement center in Sturgis, Mich. (pop. 11,285), Susan Cook is known as the "flower lady."

The former elementary school teacher motors around in her electric wheelchair placing vases of fresh flowers in the rooms of fellow residents, at the nurses' stations, on dining room tables—anyplace that could use a little bit of nature's beauty.

"You go in with a big smile and leave fresh

(Continued on page 6)

Tell Us About Those Good Deeds

Has someone performed an unexpected act of kindness for you lately? *American Profile* would like to hear stories about the compassionate acts that readers have experienced in the last year.

Post your story on the message boards at www.americanprofile.com or mail a brief letter describing the event, along with your full name, address and telephone number, to: Acts of Kindness, c/o American Profile, 341 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 400, Franklin, TN 37067.

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(Continued from page 5)

flowers. It's better than medicine," says Cook, 65, who doesn't let her multiple sclerosis overcome her desire to brighten someone's day.

She gets flower donations from friends, grocery stores and, last year, teamed up with retirement center resident Phil Cary, 88, whose family operates a gladiolus farm and brought in bucket loads of freshly cut flowers.

"The residents love it," says nurse Carol Eagan. "These flowers go to a lot of people who are alone. Sometimes it's the only thing they ever receive."

Rescued trophies

At 86, Frances Foster was throwing away her garbage when she noticed a pile of trophies

in the dumpster of her apartment complex in Washington, Ill. (pop. 10,841). Determined to recycle them, the great-grandmother used the crook of her cane to fish out the trophies one by one, rescuing more than two dozen of the shiny statues.

With the salvaged trophies in her back seat, Foster drove to Central Illinois Riding Therapy, a nonprofit horse riding camp for people of all ages with disabilities. For their shows, the East Peoria group awards its riders refurbished trophies as a cost-cutting measure. She was greeted by a barrage of teenagers and children who unloaded the boxes of trophies. "They were so excited, saying, 'Look at this one!' and 'It's beautiful!' I just bawled," Foster recalls.



Dumpster diva Frances Foster found a home for recycled trophies.

Camp director Judith Kruse says trophies are one of the best items people can recycle. "Getting a trophy means a lot to these kids—some of whom can't ride a bike or do other sports. It means a lot to their parents, too."

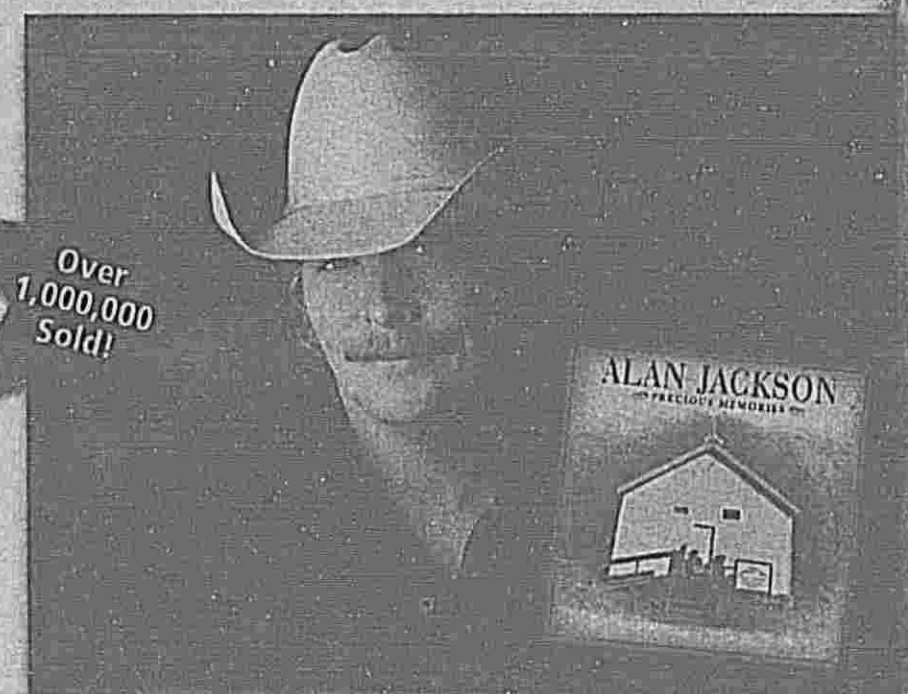
Foster jokingly refers to her November 2005 dumpster encounter as the day she became a "bag lady," but is proud of the outcome. "I grew up in the Depression in a southern Illinois town, the oldest of six children," she says. "We learned the hard way about saving and using old things."

(Continued on page 10)

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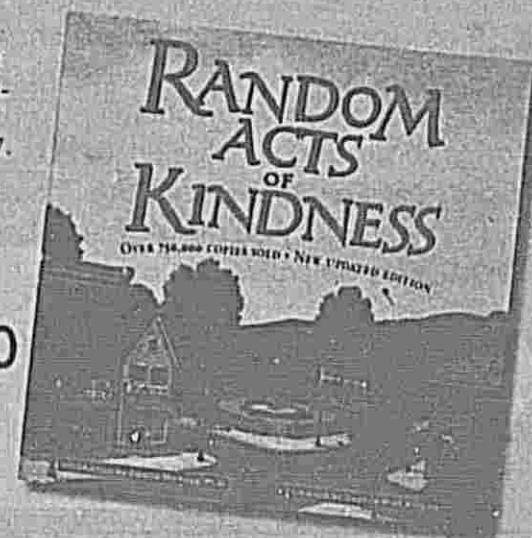
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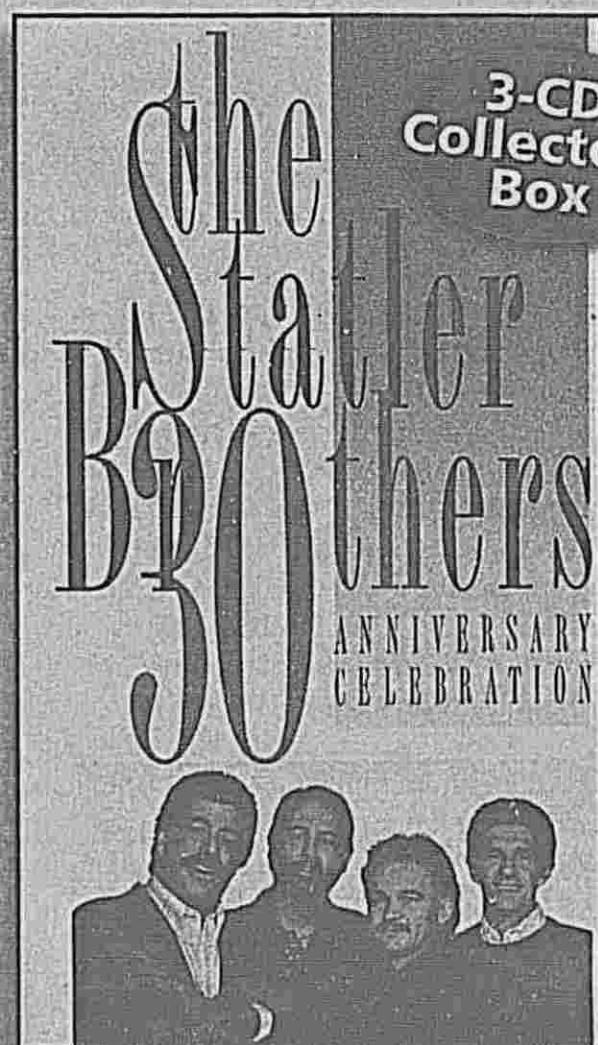


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Making Baking a Jiffy

by MARTI ATTOUN Contributing Editor



Mabel White Holmes,
Jiffy's mastermind

When Mabel White Holmes saw the hard-as-rock biscuits that a single father had baked for his sons in 1928, she set about finding a fix. For two years she experimented in her kitchen in Chelsea, Mich., until she had combined the perfect proportions of flour, shortening, sugar, salt and baking soda into America's first prepared baking mix.

For the first time, a homemaker could simply add milk to a packaged mix, and with little fuss or chance of failure, bake a batch of delicious, fluffy biscuits.

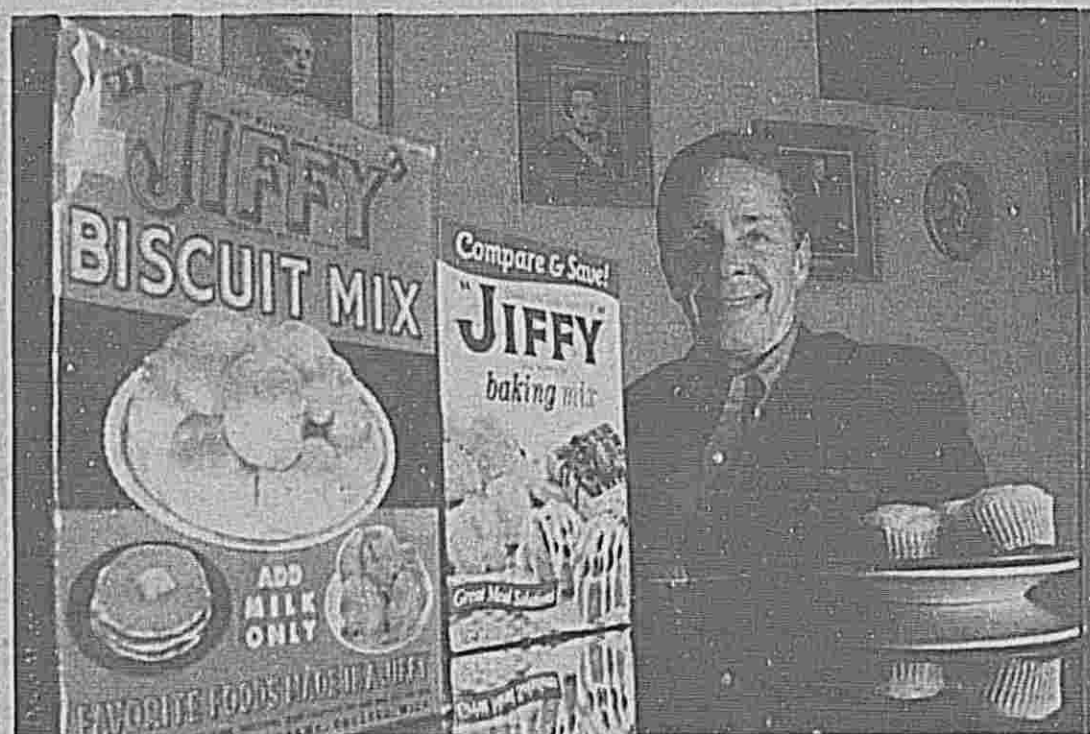
Seventy-eight years later, Holmes' grandson and his 350 employees continue to churn out more than a million boxes of Jiffy baking mixes daily at the Chelsea Milling Co. in Chelsea (pop. 4,398).

"Grandma thought, 'Wouldn't it be neat to invent a product that would taste great and be so easy that a man could make it?'" says Howdy S. Holmes, 58, company president. "The whole idea was to provide a service to homemakers."

Initially, Mabel puzzled over what to call her new product. Inspiration struck while she was behind the wheel of a car on a trip with her husband, Howard. She nearly wrecked in her excitement, Howdy says.

"My grandma remembered that when she was a small child, the lady helping in the kitchen would say, 'Mabel, you run and tell your daddy that those biscuits will be ready in a jiffy.'"

The first boxes of 40-ounce Jiffy all-purpose baking mix cost 28 cents—and sold like the hotcakes they made. Homemakers spread the word about the time-saving mix and to this day, the company relies on word-of-mouth promotion. The savings in advertising is reflected in the \$1.49 price on the 40-ounce box and the



Howdy S. Holmes is proud of his family's flour-milling tradition in Chelsea, Mich.

smaller 8.5-ounce boxes, which sometimes sell for three for a dollar.

Loyal customer Harriet Humphrey has stocked her cupboards with Jiffy mixes for 49 years. "The cornbread is an old standby," says Humphrey, 71, of Pittsford, Vt. (pop. 3,140). "I couldn't keep house without it."

The Holmes family has been selling baking ingredients to homemakers for nine generations. The family began milling flour in 1802, bought the Chelsea flour mill in 1887 and introduced its popular Jiffy mix in 1930.

Six years after launching America's baking mix industry, Mabel assumed the role of company president when her husband died in a grain silo accident. The couple's 23-year-old twin sons, Howard and Dudley Sr., ran the company and the Jiffy line continued to grow with a pie-crust mix in 1940 and a corn muffin mix in 1950.

Today, Chelsea Milling Co. fills 1.6 million Jiffy boxes daily with biscuit, cake, frosting, fudge brownie, muffin, pizza crust and pancake mixes. From the start, the company has been a do-it-all manufacturer—from milling its own flour to making its own cheery, blue boxes. With its gleaming white silos, the Chelsea plant—nicknamed Jiffyville—is a downtown landmark and favorite destination for tour groups. Visitors end tours with free samples of hot fluffy biscuits or muffins.

While today's Jiffy boxes look nearly identical to the originals and carry the slogan, "Quality and Value since 1930," Chelsea Milling Co. has endured by changing with the times.

When Howdy retired as a race-car driver and returned to the family business in 1988, he modernized the plant, built a \$4.5 million warehouse in 1996 and introduced commercial-sized mixes to cater to restaurants and hospitals.

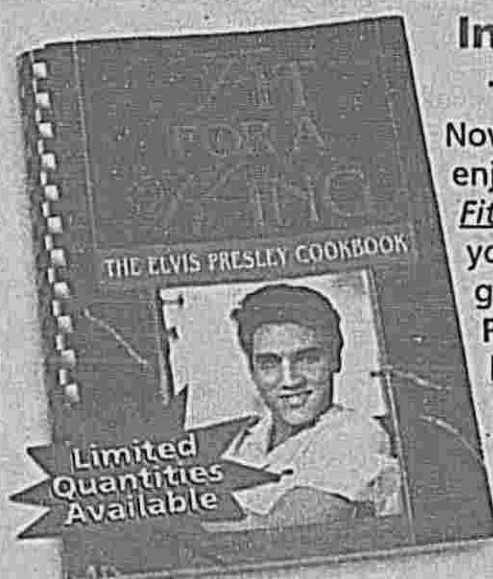
Still, he admires the perseverance of his flour-milling forefathers and cherishes the ingenuity of his grandmother. "Grandma had a simple idea and followed through," Howdy says. "She wanted to save people time and money in the kitchen."

Those basic ingredients are still valued by America's homemakers. ☆

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Bald Eagle Bus Tours—Galena, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, 17, 24, March 10. Learn about the eagle's habits, its history and preservation efforts during a four-hour tour beginning at Stoney Creek Inn. To register, call (815) 594-2306.

INDIANA

The Magical Music of Disney—Indianapolis, Jan. 12-14. The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra presents classic Disney tunes, including selections from *Beauty and the Beast* and *Snow White*, at the Hilbert Circle Theatre. (800) 366-8457.

IOWA

Iowa Boat and Vacation Show—Cedar Falls, Jan. 5-7. More than 25 dealers showcase fishing, pleasure and performance boats, fishing equipment and tackle, plus offer travel information and seminars during this event at UNI-Dome. (319) 232-0218.

KANSAS

Jest a Second—Lawrence, Jan. 19-Feb. 4. Laugh along with this James Sherman comedy about family secrets. Lawrence Community Theatre. For tickets, call (785) 843-7469.

MICHIGAN

Mr. B & Bob Seeley Concert—Traverse City, Jan. 13. Delight in blues and boogie-woogie music during this dual piano performance at the Denno Museum Center's Milliken Auditorium. (231) 995-1553.

MINNESOTA

Snow Ball! Winter Fun—St. Paul, through Feb. 4. Experience the magic of winter by building a snow palace, tossing snowballs into tree holes and catching the big one in an ice fishing house at the Minnesota Children's Museum. (651) 225-6000.

MISSOURI

King Lear—Kansas City, Jan. 19-Feb. 11. Kansas City Repertory Theatre presents Shakespeare's tragedy about the King of Britain's plan to divide his kingdom at Spencer Theatre. (816) 235-2700.

NEBRASKA

Heritage of Audubon: Today's Wildlife Artists—Kearney, Jan. 9-May 6. View original prints by John James Audubon and the works of contemporary wildlife painters, photographers and sculptors at the Museum of Nebraska Art. (308) 865-8559.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Remembers World War II—Bismarck, through Nov. 30. State veterans stories, uniforms, medals, photographs and other artifacts related to their experiences in the war highlight this exhibit at North Dakota Heritage Center. (701) 328-2666.

OHIO

Mohican Winter Fest—Loudonville, Jan. 12-14. Marvel at more than 50 ice sculptures, watch ice sculpting demonstrations and speed carving competitions, and enjoy ice skating and carriage rides on Main Street and in Central Park. (419) 994-2519.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Dakota Farm Show—Vermillion, Jan. 9-11. View farm machinery and displays of agricultural equipment and products ranging from combines to fertilizer during this 24th annual event at the Dakota Dome. (507) 437-7969.

WISCONSIN

Home Expo—Madison, Jan. 5-7. Learn about the latest in cabinets, countertops, carpets, saunas and spas at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. (608) 261-4000.

Read more Happenings at
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Submit Happenings to: www.americanprofile.com/happenings or Happenings, 341 Cool Springs Blvd., Ste. 400, Franklin, TN 37067. Submissions must be received four months prior to the event.



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(Continued from page 6)

A soldier's autograph

The Wilson family was vacationing at Disney World when, on a bus ride around the park, 8-year-old twins Drew and Adam found themselves sitting beside a man with a walking cane. As they spoke, the children learned he was wounded as a soldier during the Vietnam War.

"One of my boys asked us for a pen and paper, and then asked the man for his autograph," says Timothy Wilson of Georgetown, Ohio (pop. 3,691). "We had spent the day surrounded by Disney cartoon characters with hundreds of kids standing in line for their autographs, but this was the autograph that Drew wanted . . . because this man fought in the war. The man, along with my wife and me, were in tears as he proudly signed his name and rank for my boys. One of those proud parent moments!"



The Wilson twins at Disney World

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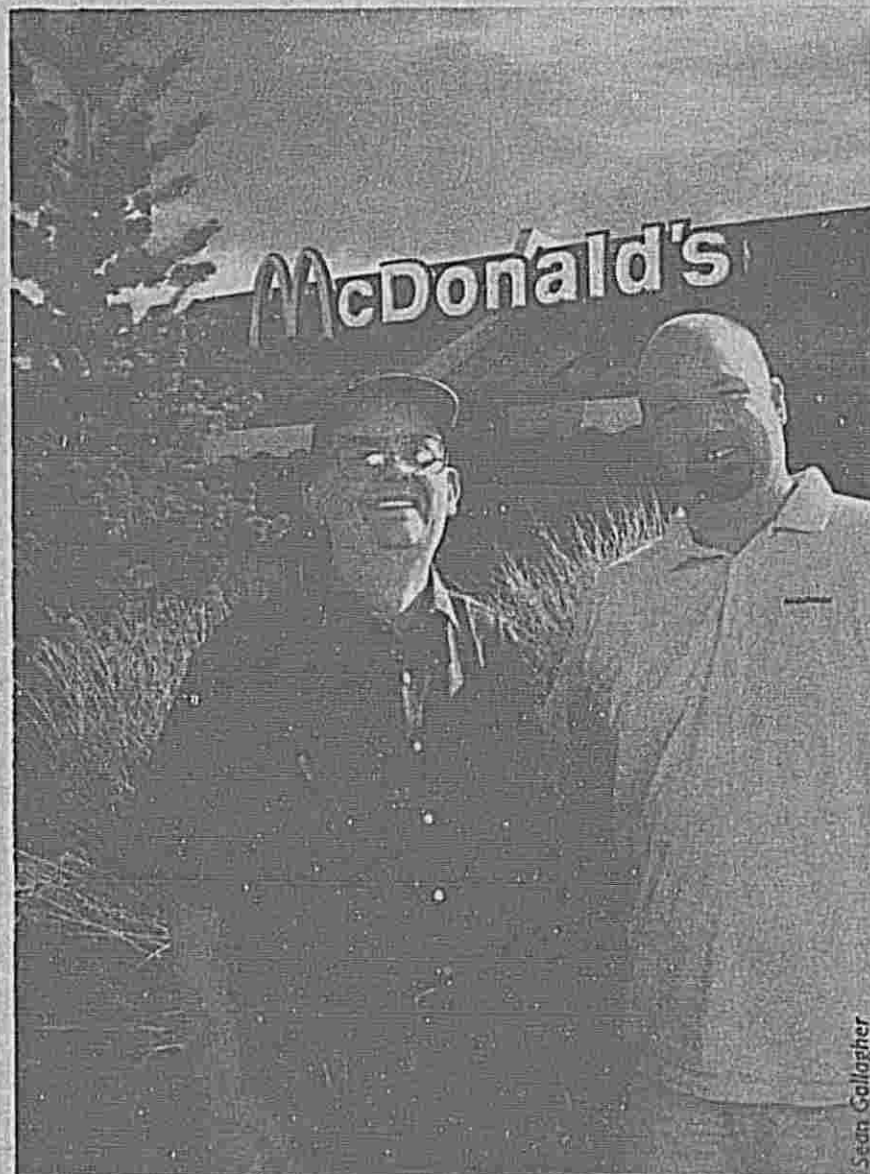
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ARTD-A652



Sean Gallagher

A good deed landed Jackie Morris (left) a job at McDonald's from Mike Bold, the restaurant's general manager in Alton, Ill.

A job for Jackie

While munching on his lunch at a McDonald's restaurant one day in Alton, Ill. (pop. 30,496), Jackie Morris noticed an elderly couple nearby and offered to take their trash to the waste can. "My parents and grandmother taught me to be polite to people," explains Morris, who suffers from a mental illness and has cared for himself since his parents died in 2001. He didn't realize anyone noticed his act of kindness until the restaurant's general manager, Mike Bold, approached to ask if he worked for him. "I said, 'No, but I'm looking for a job,'" Morris recalls.

Bold told him to come back to the restaurant on Friday and they'd fill out the paperwork and, as Morris says, "the rest is history." The 47-year-old has worked at McDonald's for three years, sweeping floors, wiping down tables and making sure napkins, straws and lids are stocked on the condiment table.

"When Jackie called to tell me he'd gotten a job offer himself, I was surprised," says Kelly Schillinger, his job coach at Challenge Unlimited, a nonprofit organization that helps people with disabilities find work. "But when he told me what he did that led to the job, it didn't surprise me at all, because that's just Jackie. That's how he is. He's a person with a good heart."

The effects of Morris' simple goodwill gesture didn't stop there. Four McDonald's operated by Bold's family have since hired 15 other people served by Challenge Unlimited, and Bold has received regional and state awards for his willingness to hire people with disabilities. "It's been a huge ripple effect," Schillinger says. "It just shows how a simple act of kindness can affect other people's lives. Because of Jackie and his kindness, a lot of other people have found jobs, too." ★

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Hometown Recipes

from TILLIE B. VAUGHAN

Tillie's Cheese Potatoes

"My mother-in-law used to bring our family dinner once a week in the 1970s when our children were growing up and we were both working. This recipe of hers is still the family's favorite." ☆

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RECIPE: Tillie's Cheese Potatoes

AmericanProfile



Tillie B. Vaughan
Victorville, Calif.



Photo: High Cotton
Food Styling & Photography



Tillie's Cheese Potatoes

- 6 large russet potatoes
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- 2 large onions, chopped
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups cold milk
- 1 pound processed cheese, cubed
- Salt and pepper

1. Place potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender. Cool and peel. Cut into bite-size chunks.
2. Preheat oven to 350F. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onions; cook until translucent. Sprinkle flour over onions and stir until butter is absorbed; do not brown. Add milk, stirring briskly with a whisk. Add cheese and cook, stirring until cheese melts and sauce thickens. Add potatoes and stir well.
3. Spoon into a 13-by-9-inch casserole dish. Bake 30 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

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